



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/960,399	09/24/2001	Hiroshi Hashimoto	011225	5652

23850 7590 05/02/2003

ARMSTRONG, WESTERMAN & HATTORI, LLP
1725 K STREET, NW
SUITE 1000
WASHINGTON, DC 20006

[REDACTED] EXAMINER

WEISS, HOWARD

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2814	

DATE MAILED: 05/02/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<i>Office Action Summary</i>	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/960,399	HASHIMOTO ET AL.
Examiner	Art Unit	
	Howard Weiss	2814

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b)

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 March 2003.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-16 and 18 ~~18~~ are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-15 ~~18~~ are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 16 and 18 ~~18~~ are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) 1-16 and 18 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on 01 October 2002 is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____. 6) Other: _____

Attorney's Docket Number: 011225

Filing Date: 9/24/01

Continuing Data: RCE established 3/5/03

Claimed Foreign Priority Date: 6/21/01 (JPX)

Applicant(s): Hashimoto et al. (Takahashi)

Examiner: Howard Weiss

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 3/5/03 has been entered.

Drawings

2. The proposed drawing correction and/or the proposed substitute sheets of drawings, filed on 10/1/02 have been approved. A proper drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The correction to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:
 - (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein

were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

4. Initially, and with respect to Claims 16 and 18, note that a "product by process" claim is directed to the product per se, no matter how actually made. See *In re Thorpe et al.*, 227 USPQ 964 (CAFC, 1985) and the related case law cited therein which make it clear that it is the final product per se which must be determined in a "product by process" claim, and not the patentability of the process, and that, as here, an old or obvious product produced by a new method is not patentable as a product, whether claimed in "product by process" claims or not. As stated in Thorpe, even though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. *In re Brown*, 459 F.2d 531, 535, 173 USPQ 685, 688 (CCPA 1972); *In re Pilkington*, 411 F.2d 1345, 1348, 162 USPQ 145, 147 (CCPA 1969); *Buono v. Yankee Maid Dress Corp.*, 77 F.2d 274, 279, 26 USPQ 57, 61 (2d. Cir. 1935).

Note that Applicant has burden of proof in such cases as the above case law makes clear.

5. Claims 16 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over admitted Prior Art Figures 8 and Gwen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,472,892).

Admitted Prior Art Figures 8 shows most aspects of the instant invention including:

- a substrate **11** with a non-volatile memory **A** including a floating gate **13** with a control gate **16** formed on said floating gate via an insulation film **14**
- first to third MOS transistors **B**, **C**, **D** with gates insulation films **12B**, **12C**, **12D** of increasing thicknesses and gate electrodes **16B**, **16C**, **16D** of substantially identical height.

Admitted Prior Art Figures 8 do not show the control and MOS gates constructed of two silicon films. Gwen et al. teach (e.g. Figure 3I) to form control gate (in cell array region) and MOS gates (in peripheral circuit region) of two silicon films **206**, **208** stacked upon each other to decrease the number of processing steps (Column 4 Lines 45 to 50). It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to form control and MOS gates of two silicon films stacked upon each other as taught by Gwen et al. in the device of the Admitted Prior Art Figures 8 to decrease the number of processing steps.

As to the grounds of rejection under "product by process", how the gate electrodes are formed (either from the same silicon films or from different films) or in what order each layer is deposited relates to intermediate process steps and does not affect the final device structure. See MPEP § 2113 which discusses the handling of "product by process" claims.

Response to Arguments

6. The Applicants' arguments filed 3/5/03 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. In reference to the arrangement of the silicon layers in the transistor electrodes, it is only the final structure (i.e. electrodes with two silicon layers stacked upon each other) that is considered in device claims. The Applicants' designation of how the layers of silicon are arranged (i.e. first on second silicon layer and second on third silicon layer) in the peripheral transistors' electrodes and the control electrode pertain to how these devices are manufactured (i.e. "product by process"). The Applicants have failed to point out how the final device of the claimed instant invention is distinct from the device of the combined prior art.

In reference to the interlayer insulating layer shown in Gwen et al., silicon layers **204** and **208** are joined together and act as a single electrode making this a MOS transistor (Figure 3J and Column 4 Lines 62 to 66). In view of these reasons and those set forth in the present office action, the rejections of the stated claims stand.

Conclusion

7. Papers related to this application may be submitted directly to Art Unit 2814 by facsimile transmission. Papers should be faxed to Art Unit 2814 via the Art Unit 2814 Fax Center located in Crystal Plaza 4, room 3C23. The faxing of such papers must conform with the notice published in the Official Gazette, 1096 OG 30 (15 November 1989). The Art Unit 2814 Fax Center number is **(703) 308-7722 or -7724**. The Art Unit 2814 Fax Center is to be used only for papers related to Art Unit 2814 applications. The official TC2800 Before-Final, **(703) 872-9318**, and After-Final, **(703) 872-9319**, Fax numbers will provide the fax sender with an auto-reply fax verifying receipt of their fax by the USPTO.
8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Howard Weiss at **(703) 308-4840** and between the hours of 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM (Eastern Standard Time) Monday through Friday or by e-mail via **Howard.Weiss@uspto.gov**. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group 2800 Receptionist at **(703) 308-0956**.
9. The following list is the Examiner's field of search for the present Office Action:

Field of Search	Date
U.S. Class / Subclass(es): 257/321,392	thru 12/5/02
Other Documentation: none	
Electronic Database(s): EAST	thru 12/5/02

HW/hw
1 May 2003

Howard Weiss
Examiner
Art Unit 2814

